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ABSTRACT

The information report to the superintendent of public instruction and to the California Board of Education contains statistics on the representation of minority groups in programs for the mentally handicapped (MH). Noted are school districts that have a 15 percent or greater variance between the ethnic group population in the district and the number of individuals from the ethnic group assigned to special classes for the educable mentally handicapped. Data are thought to indicate that the use of a percentage factor may not be an adequate index of the need for special educational provisions among ethnic groups. It is recommended that educators remove the label "mentally handicapped" from ethnic pupils and that they provide several program options for MH pupils. (GW)

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ETHNIC SURVEEY OF EMR CLASSES

Information Report
To
Superintendent of Public Instruction
And To
State Board of Education
(per E.C. 6902.10)

Presented April 10, 1974

To State Board of Education
POLICIES AND PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

California State Department of Education
1973

Allan Simmons, Chief
Bureau for Mentally Exceptional Children

Leslie Brinegar, Associate Superintendent
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Support Unit

EC 662783

ANNUAL REPORT
(for School Year 1972-73)

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"The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall annually report to the State Board of Education on those school districts in which there is a significant variance in racial and ethnic composition between special education classes for mentally retarded minors established pursuant to Sections 6901 to 6913 and the regular enrollment of the district." (Education Code, Section 6902.10)

This report is one of several that has been prepared during the last few years. The first was a report to the Legislature as required by House Resolution 444 (in 1970). The second formal report was in compliance with House Resolution 262 in 1971. A brief summary report was submitted in 1972.

Since the above resolutions were introduced, several significant legislative changes have become operational. These included SB 1317 (1970); SB 33 (1971); SB 171 (1972); and SB 1218 (1972). Other legislation such as SB 529 (1970) also had a significant impact on policies, practices and procedures in the determination of those pupils eligible for placement in a program for the educable mentally retarded. The criteria for admission have become specific regarding the use of psychological evaluations and parent involvement, including written consent. The legislation expressed the intent: " . . . that there should not be disproportionate enrollment of any socio-economic, minority, or ethnic group pupils in classes for the mentally retarded."

State Total Enrollments in EMR Program

Since the 1968-69 school year, the enrollment of pupils assigned to special classes for EMR pupils has steadily declined. The fall enrollment figures are shown in the following tabulation:

School YearEnrollment*

1968-69	57,148
1969-70	54,078
1970-71	47,864
1971-72	38,208
1972-73	33,091

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*Enrollment from the October first period report.

Status of Ethnic Enrollment

The following chart presents a comparison of enrollments in classes for educable mentally retarded minors as of October 1969 and in June 1970 and June 1973:

Ethnic Group	Enrollment October 1969	Percent of Total EMR Enrollment	Enrollment June 1970	Percent of Total EMR Enrollment	Enrollment June 1973	Percent of Total EMR Enrollment
Spanish Surname	15,657	28.20	12,276	25.79	8,077	23.00
Black	15,022	27.06	12,253	25.73	8,776	25.00
White (other than Spanish Surname)	23,947	43.13	22,125	46.48	17,539	49.95
American Indian	244	.44	261	.55	200	.57
Oriental	326	.59	359	.75	238	.68
Filipino & Other Minorities	323	.58	331	.70	280	.80
TOTALS	55,519		47,605		35,110	100.00

The large decrease during 1969-70 was the result of required retesting of all EMR pupils and the removal of those pupils found to be ineligible under the standards of SB 1317 (1970).

There has been a total reduction of 20,409 pupils or 37 percent of the enrollment over the five year period. The removal of 7,580 pupils is a 48 percent reduction in pupils with Spanish Surnames, and the removal of 6,246 pupils is a 42 percent reduction in the enrollment of Black pupils in classes for the retarded.

The change in the percentages of ethnic group representation has been small. A 5.2 percent reduction has occurred among Spanish Surname pupils and

a 2 percent reduction among Black pupils. Neither group has approached the statewide pupil enrollments of 16 percent Spanish Surname and 9.3 percent Black pupils.

The data indicate that no ethnic group is heavily over-represented with respect to expected incidence of mental retardation. Professional surveys and literature, including the President's Commission on Mental Retardation, have estimated the incidence of expectancy of retardation conservatively at 2 percent of the population nationally. The President's Commission projected estimates of 7 percent in specific instances such as in low socioeconomic conditions where the prevalency of delayed or impaired development may be reflected in mental retardation. The data indicate that California public schools may be under-enrolling pupils who may need special help in coping with their school learning.

The Education Code Section 6902.095 provides that a school district shall provide an explanation to the Department of Education when there is a variance of 15 percent or more between the ethnic group in the district as a whole and those assigned to the EMR special classes. School districts that have a 15 percent or greater variance are noted in the attached list. In each case an explanation was given by the district if there was a variance of over 15 percent from the regular school population.

The explanations ranged widely in their rationale for various percentages of ethnic or racial proportions. It was noted by some that particularly stringent criteria have been utilized during the last few years, but that there still seems to be a higher proportion of referrals from the Black and Spanish Surnamed populations. Where variance occurred the district would argue that every precaution had been utilized to avoid the misplacement of any child in classes for the mentally retarded. It was a common explanation that educationally this was the best possible resource available for functionally

retarded pupils who may be a high risk for future academic or school success.

CONCLUSION

Despite five years of effort to correct over-representation of minority groups in programs for the mentally retarded, the results indicate the approaches taken in recent legislation are inappropriate solutions to the problem. The use of a percentage factor may not be an adequate index of the need for special education provisions among ethnic groups. Improved testing procedures, greater emphasis on non-test data, and test score limitations have resulted in a large reduction in the number of pupils being provided special education, but the reduction has been nearly proportionate among all ethnic groups.

Further actions are suggested at this time especially in view of continued legal actions seeking solutions to the apparent problem: (1) Remove the label "mentally retarded" from this group of pupils. Two major facts are supported by research: IQ scores do change and some pupils do make remarkable progress under appropriate instructional approaches; and, many children are regarded as retarded only by the school and only during the school years of their life. A third factor is the extensive public relations effort that tends to link all mental retardation with the more severe conditions of retardation. Therefore, a name change might help to reduce the "lifetime" stigma of special programs for the mild or moderately retarded.

(2) Provide several program options for the instruction of mentally retarded pupils. The mentally retarded pupils' program is the only special education program that is restricted by law to special day classes solely. Legislative change needs to be sought to provide a range of program options such as currently exist for physically handicapped and educationally handicapped pupils. These changes, together with continued efforts to improve the instruction in special programs, may reduce the social pressure that is so defeating for minority pupils, and will help develop a positive image of this program among all groups.

The California Master Plan for Special Education has encompassed these recommendations and holds the promise of correcting a part of the problem. As full implementation of the plan is still several years away, the urgency of the present situation may require more immediate actions. The department will make recommendations as soon as the pending litigation has been decided.

Prepared by Fred Hanson, Consultant,
Mentally Retarded Programs

SCHOOL DISTRICTS WHOSE ENROLLMENTS OF ETHNIC MINORITY PUPILS
EXCEEDED THE 15% VARIANCE OF
EDUCATION CODE SECTION 6902.095 FOR THE 1972-73 SCHOOL YEAR

CountyDistrict

Alameda

Berkeley Unified

Contra Costa

Brentwood Elementary
Martinez Unified
Pittsburg Unified
Richmond Unified

Fresno

Fresno Unified
Kerman Union High
Kingsburg Elementary
Kings Canyon
Sanger Unified
Washington Union High

Imperial

Central Union High

Kern

Kern Union High
Wasco Elementary

Kings

Corcoran Unified
Hanford Union High
Lemoore Elementary
Lemoore Union High

Lassen

Lassen Union High

Los Angeles

Azusa Unified
Duarte Unified
El Monte Elementary
Keppel Union Elementary
Los Angeles Unified
Lynwood Unified
Monrovia Unified
Palmdale Elementary
Pasadena Unified
Pomona Unified
San Gabriel Elementary
Santa Monica Unified
Saugus Union Elementary
Whittier Union High
Wm. S. Hart Union High

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County

District

Madera

Madera Unified

Marin

Tamapais Union High

Mendocino

Ukiah Unified

Merced

Dos Palos Joint Union Elementary
Dos Palos Joint Union High

Monterey

Monterey Peninsula
Salinas Union High
Soledad Union Elementary

Orange

Centralia Elementary
Fullerton Joint Union High
La Habra City Elementary
Orange Unified
Placentia Unified
Santa Ana Unified

Riverside

Banning Unified
Palm Springs Unified
Palo Verde Unified

Sacramento

Elk Grove Unified
River Delta Joint Unified
Sacramento City Unified

San Bernardino

Chaffey Union High
Fontana Unified
Redlands Unified

San Diego

Escondido Union High
San Diego Unified
San Ysidro
Vista City Unified

San Francisco

San Francisco Unified

San Joaquin

Stockton City Unified

San Mateo

Jefferson Elementary
Jefferson Union High
Sequoia Union High

Santa Barbara

Santa Maria Joint Union High

Santa Clara

Morgan Hill Unified
San Jose Unified

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County

District

Siskiyou

Siskiyou Union High

Solano

Benecia Unified
Vallejo City Unified

Tulare

Dinuba Joint Union High
Earlilmart Elementary
Exeter Union Elementary
Lindsay Unified

Ventura

Oxnard Elementary
Oxnard Union High
Santa Paula Elementary
Santa Paula High

Yolo

Woodland Joint Unified